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USAID Monthly Newsletter

Regional news



Transmission planning model will optimize electricity distribution. Photo: USAID

Energy Transmission Planning Models for Central Asia

With USAID support, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek national energy companies have created models for both short-term and long-term planning of energy generation, transmission, and distribution. The models will help optimize energy flows, minimize energy outages in each country, as well as identify needed investments. To create the models, USAID's energy program provided specialized software, training, and consultations for data input and analysis. USAID will also help integrate these national models into a regional Central Asian energy transmission planning model that will take into account inherent interdependencies of the energy systems in the region.



USAID helped train professors of accounting in international standards. Photo: Pragma

Central Asia Is Increasing Its Cadre of Accountants With International Qualifications

By September 2008, over 7,000 Central Asia's accountants have passed internationally-recognized accounting qualifications thanks to the assistance from USAID. More than half of these specialists, 4,575, are Kazakh. Over the past ten years, USAID projects have extensively promoted the proliferation of international accounting standards and the specialists qualified to use them in the region. Due to this support, Central Asia now has a self-sustainable examination and certification body with headquarters in Almaty that is responsible for conducting the tests and awarding accounting qualifications. USAID has also helped to develop a cadre of trainers who help prepare the

specialists for these qualifications and continue promoting the use of international standards region-wide. The proliferation of international accounting standards reduces corruption through regularized financial reporting, thereby helping countries attract foreign investment.

Kyrgyzstan



During the Doing Business Presentation in Bishkek. Photo: Pragma

Kyrgyzstan - Among the Top 10 Business Reformers

The World Bank *Doing Business 2009* report named Kyrgyzstan one of the three top reformers worldwide and ranked it 68th among 181 surveyed economies, up from 99th ranking last year, based on the regulatory environment for doing business. The Government of Kyrgyzstan thanked USAID for its support in identifying and carrying out reforms that have improved the country's ranking. USAID's assistance in this area was provided through its Business Environment Improvement project. One of the key changes that has upgraded Kyrgyzstan's ranking was the introduction of the one-window approach for construction permits that eliminated duplicate procedures for construction permits, cut the time to obtain the permits by 75%, and reduced costs to



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USAID's donation is ready to be distributed to target beneficiaries. Photo: CAPACITY



AUCA is seeking U.S. accreditation to enhance its status. Photo: USAID



Official opening ceremony for the center for blind and partially blind. Photo: EFCA



The \$1.7 million project will work to increase wheat and milk production. Photo: IFDC

business to 40-44%. The Kyrgyz Government has set a goal to become one of the 20 top countries in Doing Business ranking within the next two years, and USAID will continue helping the country achieve this target.

USAID Cooperates with Other Donors to Fight HIV/AIDS

USAID has recently donated over one million male and female condoms to the Kyrgyz Republic to support HIV/AIDS prevention in the cities of Osh and Karasu. The donation was facilitated by the USAID-funded CAPACITY project and coordinated with the Kyrgyz ministry of health. The condoms will be distributed by the HIV prevention project TUMAR, funded by the World Bank. TUMAR will provide condoms to sex workers who are also intravenous drug users in the areas of Kyrgyzstan that border with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and are on a major drug trafficking route. The USAID-funded project CAPACITY is a long-term partner of TUMAR in the introduction of HIV/AIDS prevention models in Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian countries.

USAID Helps A University With U.S. Accreditation

The American University of Central Asia (AUCA) received nearly \$500,000 from USAID to jumpstart its U.S. accreditation process. AUCA is the first Western-style university in Kyrgyzstan to initiate the accreditation application process. By obtaining U.S. accreditation, AUCA would gain international recognition as a university that has the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes and

that its students are benefiting from its curricular and extra-curricular programs. The multi-stage accreditation process requires a lot of time, effort, and financial resources. The USAID grant will cover the costs for the first 2-year step of the process - achieving the status of a candidate for accreditation. This step includes an institutional self-study of AUCA's compliance with the accreditation standards.

Support for People in Need

USAID and Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia (EFCA) opened a new center for blind and partially blind people in Osh, southern Kyrgyzstan. The center offer to its visitors special equipment that will enable people with eyesight problems work on computer, write and edit texts, read flat-bed literature, translate texts into Braille, as well as use various databases, electronic information, and Internet. The center was created by NGO "Blagodat" (Grace) under a USAID grant, issued through EFCA, to support social adaptation of the disabled and access to information for the visually disabled. USAID paid for the specialized equipment at the center, while the Osh Municipality provided the facilities.

USAID Continues Food Security Support in Kyrgyzstan

To increase food production and rural incomes, USAID signed a \$1.7 million extension to its Kyrgyz Agro-input Enterprise Development project, implemented by the International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural



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Development (IFDC). Over the coming two years this project will focus on increasing the production of two major food staples in Kyrgyzstan - wheat and milk. The project will cooperate with the Association of Agribusinessmen of Kyrgyzstan (AAK), other associations, and local service providers, as well as the government agencies to expand the network of farm stores for better farmer access to agricultural inputs. The project will also work to improve livestock feed and dairy cow care to reduce the livestock losses in winter, make veterinary vaccines, medicines, and information more available. To increase wheat harvests, the project will continue promoting quality seeds, fertilizers, and progressive agricultural techniques.

Tajikistan



Improved water management brings higher harvests. Photo: USAID



Representatives of USAID, Ministry of Health initial the MOU. Photo: USAID



With electronic database, TB reporting will be more efficient. Photo: USAID

USAID and Winrock Help Increase Farmer Incomes

With USAID support, 30 Tajik water user associations restored irrigation canals, reclaimed over 2,000 hectares of previously unused land, and increased farmer incomes by over 170%. Assistance, provided by the USAID-funded Water User Associations Support Program, also helped farmers improve water distribution along the canal, enhance management of their associations, and ensure reliable water supply for thousands of residents and 60,000 hectares of land.

USAID, Ministry of Health Sign MOU on Cooperation

To improve program management and cooperation in Tajikistan's healthcare sector, USAID Regional Director William Frej and Minister of Health Nustratullo Salimov on September 26, 2008 signed a key Memorandum of Understanding between Governments of Tajikistan and USA. The MOU presents the overarching framework for \$5.1 million allocated in health and education programs carried out by USAID implementing partners. USAID currently is engaged with the Ministry of Health in a number of priority areas: HIV/AIDS prevention, improving reproductive health and family planning; expanded utilization of quality health care; epidemiology; tuberculosis control, Food for Peace, and personal hygiene and sanitation education. In the coming months USAID and the ministry will launch two more projects, STOP Avian Influenza, and Scaling up Maternal and Child Health.

Modern Technologies to Control the Spread of TB

In September, CDC, with funding from USAID, trained a group of Tajik specialists from Tuberculosis (TB) hospitals to understand and interpret the Tajik TB Electronic Surveillance Case-based Management System (TB ESCM) database. This is yet another step towards the nationwide implementation of the system that will replace the currently used slow and labor-intensive paper-based TB reporting with comprehensive and efficient electronic reporting. Once implemented throughout the country, the database will help doctors and the Ministry of Health track and analyze TB epidemics, compare data with other countries in the region, and prepare more effective control and prevention measures. This system was developed and piloted with

USAID support in all five Central Asian countries. The replication of the system will be financed by the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria.



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Tajik mothers now have better knowledge about health. Photo: Mercy Corps

USAID Helps Enhance Maternal and Child Health

A 4-year joint USAID and Mercy Corps program has substantially contributed to maternal and child health and enhanced community knowledge of health prevention techniques, risks, and home treatment strategies in Soughd area. According to the program's data, compared to 2004, women have significantly increased their ability to describe at least two signs of pregnancy complications (from 0.3% in 2004 to 90% in 2008), delivery (from 7% to 82%), post-partum (from 2% to 77%) and newborn illness (from 4% to 88%). Similarly, 81% of men now can describe two newborn dangers signs, compared to 6% in 2004. The program partnered with the Soughd Department of Health, the Centers for Healthy Lifestyles, and local communities to strengthen quality services and promote behaviors beneficial for maternal-child health and good nutrition.

Turkmenistan



USAID will help Turkmenistan further economic reforms. Photo: USAID

USAID to Help Foster Turkmen Economic Reforms

Recently, USAID achieved a breakthrough in its relationship with two new key Turkmen agencies responsible for fostering economic reforms in the country: Turkmenistan's Supreme Regulatory Chamber and the Institute for Strategic Planning and Economic Development agreed to cooperate with USAID Economic Reforms to Enhance Competitiveness (EREC) program. The USAID program will help develop a strategy for state support of private sector growth and build staff capacity for the Supreme Regulatory Chamber, which serves as the chief audit body in Turkmenistan. The USAID program will also facilitate the development of legislation for the government procurement.



The project teaches communities to identify and plan local service improvements. Photo: Counterpart

Communities Learn to Collaborate with Government, Improve Local Services

The USAID-funded Turkmenistan Community Empowerment Program has helped 43 Turkmen communities, mostly rural, expand cooperation with the local governments in identifying and carrying out projects for the improvement of local services. The three-year project, implemented by Counterpart International, has trained over 5,000 people, including local government officials, in identifying, planning, and carrying out community projects. It has disbursed 73 grants with \$55,000 in community cost-share to improve community-level services: road conditions, irrigation water supply, and access to gas and electricity. The project also developed a comprehensive database of Turkmen legislative documents and helped provide over 5,000 legal consultations to communities to expand their participation in local decision-making.



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Uzbekistan



Credit unions help finance businesses and create jobs. Photo: USAID



USAID-funded textbook will help prevent drug use and HIV/AIDS spread among Uzbek youth. Photo: DDRP

in the country and the second one prepared with DDRP support. The first one – *Drug Use Prevention Manual for Teachers of Secondary Schools* – was published in 20,000 copies in 2006 and distributed countrywide by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education during the 2006-2007 school year.

Credit Unions Assets Exceed \$52 Million

During the first half of 2008, assets of the Uzbek credit unions exceeded 70 billion Uzbek Soums (\$52 million). Uzbekistan currently has 60 credit unions with over 80,000 members. Through the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), USAID has helped draft legislation, facilitated creation of a number of credit unions, and has been providing assisting in improving their services. The first credit unions in Uzbekistan appeared with USAID support in 2002 after adoption of the Law On Credit Unions. Currently credit unions operate in most regions of Uzbekistan, with a majority in Tashkent city.

USAID Helps Uzbekistan Promote Drug Prevention in Vocational Schools

The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education of Uzbekistan will distribute countrywide 4,000 copies of the training manual *Drug Use Prevention Among Students of Academic Lyceums and Vocational Colleges*, developed with support from USAID. The manual was developed by the USAID-funded Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP), implemented in part by the Population Services International, and the Uzbek Center for Secondary Special Professional Education. DDRP helped prepare the text, piloted the manual in several vocational schools, and published it. The manual came out both in Uzbek and Russian versions and will be used by vocational school teachers across the country to prevent initiation of drug use among Uzbekistan's youth. This manual is second of its kind



An outreach campaign taught youth about HIV/AIDS prevention. Photo: CAPACITY

Fergana Valley Youth - for Healthy Lifestyle

USAID's CAPACITY project in cooperation with the Social Initiative Support Fund conducted a series of events to promote healthy life style and increase awareness on prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug use in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan. The events ran with a slogan "We are for a healthy lifestyle; we have no time for anything else" and focused on students of higher educational institutions, colleges, as well as other Uzbek youth. More than 4,000 young people participated in contests, quizzes and interactive peer-to-peer education sessions, and have become more aware of the dangers of drug use and HIV/AIDS.